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VII.

**Commentary on the Pentateuch Composed in Russia, before
1155 A.D.**

THE Vatican MS., No. 300, contains, on fol. 17b, the following documents:—(1) concerning the Flagellants in Italy in the year 1260; (2) the disturbance at Rome in 1261, when Pope Urban IV. was obliged to leave the city; and (3) the birth of a lamb in an extraordinary shape, which occurred at Viterbo, Sunday, the 22nd of Tishri, 5051 A.M.=28th September, 1290, which, however, was on a Thursday (this day consequently does not agree with the Hebrew date).

מצאתי כתוב בשנת ה"כ לב"ע נתעוררו העם היא מלכות אדום לבכות ולספור והיו הולכים ערום ויחף משוטטי ומתבטלים ונחבטים בשוטים והתחילו הדבר בפירושא היא עיר קצה תושכנא מבני תובל והלך עד רומי ומרומי נתפזר הדבר ליעשות בכל איטליא :

בשנת ה"כא היה חדשה בעולם שלא היה מלך רומי ולא אפיפיור ברומי ימים רבים ותהי עיר רומי בתגר גדול והאיש הישר בעיניו יעשה ולא היה אדם ברומי שראה או שמע כזאת לכן יש להאמין כי נתקרב עת ישועה לישראל בביאת הגואל : וביום א' בכ"ב תשרי שנת ה"נא י ימים ליציאת טביט' נולד כבש אחד בביטרבו בצורה הזאת רק לא היה אלא צורת ראש אחר :

Next follows an extract from a commentary on the Pentateuch, composed (according to Assemani's catalogue, fol. 288), in Russia in the year 1094 (we shall discuss later on this date). The Hebrew heading is the following:—**בפי חומש שנעשה** ברוסיאה בשנת אצד מצאתי כתוב בפרשת בלק י שנינו בסנהדרין פרק אלו הנשרפין הבועל ארמית..... This passage agrees with that found in the Bodleian MS., No. 213 of the new catalogue (fol. 201f, sect. *Balak*), which contains Collectanea on the Pentateuch, by Samuel of Russia; consequently, there can be no doubt that the extract from MS. Vat. 300 was taken from Samuel's Commentary. Assemani (Cat. Vat., No. CCC, 6, on fol. 288) says that the copy of our extract is made from a MS. which was written in the year 4854 A.M. = 1094 A.D., taking the date אצד as the Christian era. This, however, occurs seldom in comparatively old Hebrew MSS., and in later writers the word למנינם, "according to their reckoning," is usually added.¹

¹ See Harkavy's *Die Juden und die slavischen Sprachen*, Vilna, 1867, p. 17.

The date אצד (1094) means, according to the Bodleian MS., No. 213, and the Vatican MS., No. 56, the year of the destruction of the Second Temple, viz., 1158 A.D. Indeed, the Vatican MS. 56, which contains Samuel's Collectanea, expresses the date with the same words, excepting a few variations, as the Bodleian MS. 213, but the dates differ in the two MS. We shall give here the passage extracted from the Vatican MS., No. 56, fol. 28a, according to the copy of our learned friend Professor Ignazio Guidi, of the University of Rome, with the variations of the Bodleian MS.:—
 עקב סי[מן] למחשבי חרבן הבית פי¹—
 כשחרב הבית (השני) היה עומד העולם בברייתו ד' אלפיספחות *ק' שבעים²
 על ד' אלפים ויוסף עקב *ק' ושבעים ושנים ובמקום שכלה החשבון שם יגרע
 כמה שנים מחרבן הבית * והיום בעונותינו אנו עומדים בשמונה מאות
 *ושמונים וד' ליצירה הוסיף *עקב שהוא *מאה ושבעים ושנים הרי אלף
 וחמשים ושש לחרבן הבית וזה היה בעת שחי[ברו] הכפר הזה ברושיאה
 אבל¹⁰ אנו עכשיו יש [לנו] *אלף ותשעים וארבע לחרבן הבית¹¹ :

The date 1086 has been taken by Dr. Steinschneider,¹² who saw the MS. hurriedly, as 5086 A.M. = 1326 A.D.; in reality, however, the date 1086 means that of the destruction of the Temple, viz., 1154 A.D., in which year the 26th of Shebat was on a Wednesday, which is not the case for the year 1326. In the Vatican MS. the date from the destruction of the Temple is 1094=1162 A.D., consequently, the extract found in the Vatican MS., No. 300, (see above, p. 701) is derived from the Vatican MS., No. 56, which contains the commentary of Samuel of Russia at a time when the word ברושיאה was still legible. However, neither the Bodleian nor the Vatican MSS. are of the twelfth century, but they were respectively copied from MSS. written in the years 1154 A.D. and 1162 A.D.

Speaking of Russia, we may be allowed to rectify a mistake which

¹ [] mark words and letters only in the Vatican MS.; () those only in the Bodleian MS.

² עקב קעב יראה המחשב בכמה שנים הוא בברייתו של-עולם, O.

³ O., וע'ב, ק'.

⁴ O., יודע.

⁵ O., עומדין.

⁶ B., בח'.

⁷ O., פ"ב

⁸ O., הוכף.

⁹ O., וע'ב, ק'.

¹⁰ According to O., in Vat. MS., the letters אאה are overtraced and indistinct.

¹¹ O., ושמונים ושש ד' בשבת כ"ו לירח שבט שהוא מנין אפ"ו.

¹² *Hebr. Bibliographie*, XIII., p. 116.

was made involuntarily by our learned friend Dr. Harkavy.¹ He says, according to Zunz, that in the year 1510 A.D., Polish Jews, who spoke Polish, sojourned at Brescia, for whose use Biblical books were translated into Polish, and these translations are contained in MSS. of the celebrated De Rossian Library at Parma. Dr. Harkavy expresses the wish that some Slavonic scholar should investigate these MSS., and state in which Slavonic dialect they are written, in Polish or in Russian. He is surprised that Cav. Pietro Perreau, the former librarian at Parma, who is a great linguist, should not have given a description of these MSS. in his additions to De Rossi's Catalogue. Through the kindness of our learned friend, Dr. L. Modona, of the Parma Library, we can state that the MSS., headed, in De Rossi's Catalogue (t. II., p. 200, col. 2, Nos. 1 and 2) *Codices Polonici*, contain nothing else but a translation, in *jüdisch Deutsch*, the German jargon of Polish Jews. Dr. Modona gives the following description of them:—

No. 1 contains translations of—*a*, some legends (מעשיות) concerning Solomon and Ashmodeus and others, followed by the Psalms. At the end the following colophon is found:—ביום א' במרחשון רע"א לפ"ק פה (the א not being distinct, perhaps ק or ן) ברישה נאם משה בר מרדכי פרלאג [5]271 A.M.=1420 A.D., at Brescia, says Moses son of Mordecai." Next comes a Judaico-German translation of the Books of Joshuah. of Judges, and of the Book of Jonah (הפטרס of י"ה). At the end the following colophon is to be found:—י"ג סיון רע"א לפ"ק פה ק"ק מנטובה:— "the 13th of the month of Siwan, 271=1421, at Mantova." The MS. is written in cursive Germanico-Polish characters. De Rossi, in his description of these MSS., has mixed up the characters with the language.

No. 2 contains a similar translation of the four Meguilloth, not Ecclesiastes, followed by פסוקים, אזהרות (MS. אזהמות) and of קינות, the last for the month of Ab. At the end the name of the scribe, Abraham son of Elijah, is given. As specimens of these translations Dr. Modona gives the following:—*a*, of Esther—

אז אחשורש קוניגרייך די ווארהייט שד? שרייב איך אויך זיכר ל'בן צו דער גאולה וואר אונש אסתר בירייט אז אונש דיא גילערנט האבן גיזנט סליק המגילה: אל היא וויל איך דיר שרייבן דז, גוט ביהויט הויכש אונ? ליבליך שיר השירים:

Jonah iv. 10, reads as follows:—

ווען ער וואר בישאפין אין איינר נאכט און דער אנדר נאכט זו וואר עס

¹ *Op. cit.* (p. 701, note 1), p. 37.

פֿיר לורן אונ' איך זולט מיך איך ניט דער בארמן אויף נינוה די שטאט זו
 גרוש ד' אינן אישט צוואלף הונדרט ש.....

The MS. in Russian (described by De Rossi as follows: *Liber Precum cum calendario*, memb. 12, Sec. XVI.) is written in Cyrillic characters, and seems to contain a calendar, followed by some magic and astrological formulæ. It has nothing to do with Judaic literature.

A. N.
